

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of manufacturing an implement, comprising:

(1) providing a first group of engine types and a second group of transmission types at a common, first manufacturing facility;

(2) selecting a desired module configuration;

(3) selecting a desired engine from the first group and a desired transmission from the second group;

(4) connecting the selected engine and transmission together in accordance with the desired module configuration to provide a base of the implement;

(5) transporting the base of the implement to a second facility;

(6) providing a working device at the second facility; and

(7) connecting the working device to the base of the implement at the second facility.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein step (1) further comprises providing a third group of steering mechanism types at the common, first manufacturing facility.

3. The method of Claim 2, wherein step (3) further comprises selecting a desired steering mechanism from the third group.

4. The method of Claim 3, wherein step (4) further comprises connecting the steering mechanism with the engine and transmission.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the first group includes vertical shaft engines and horizontal shaft engines.

6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the second group includes hydrostatic transaxles, manual shift transaxles, and friction drive transaxles.

7. The method of Claim 2, wherein the third group includes a spring clutch and trigger controlled steering mechanism and a bi-directional clutch and intuitive steering mechanism.

8. The method of Claim 1, further comprising selecting a working device from the group consisting of an auger assembly, a cultivating blade assembly, and a mower blade assembly.

9. The method of Claim 1, further comprising, after step (7):

providing a handle at the second facility; and
attaching the handle to the base of the implement at the second manufacturing facility.

10. The method of Claim 1, further comprising, after step (4):

providing at least two wheels at the first manufacturing facility; and
attaching the wheels to the transmission at the first manufacturing facility.

11. The method of Claim 1, further comprising, after step (4):

providing a drive linkage at the first manufacturing facility; and
attaching the drive linkage at the first manufacturing facility to the base of the implement and selected parts to provide a driving connection therebetween.

12. The method of Claim 1, wherein, after step (7), a substantially completed implement is produced, and further comprising:

packaging the substantially completed implement; and
transporting the substantially completed implement from the second manufacturing facility to one of a wholesaler, a retailer, and a customer.

13. The method of Claim 1, wherein step (6) further includes providing a drive linkage with the working device.

14. The method of Claim 13, wherein step (7) includes connecting the drive linkage of the working device to the working device and the base of the implement.

15. A method of manufacturing an implement, comprising:

(1) providing a first group of engine types, a second group of transmission types, and a third group of steering mechanism types at a common, first manufacturing facility;

(2) selecting a desired module configuration;

(3) selecting a desired engine from the first group, a desired transmission from the second group, and a desired steering mechanism from the third group;

(4) connecting the selected engine, transmission, and steering mechanism together in accordance with the desired module configuration to provide a base of the implement;

(5) transporting the base of the implement to a second facility;

(6) providing a working device at the second facility; and

(7) connecting the working device to the base of the implement at the second facility.

16. The method of Claim 15, wherein the first group includes vertical shaft engines and horizontal shaft engines.

17. The method of Claim 15, wherein the second group includes hydrostatic transaxles, manual shift transaxles, and friction drive transaxles.

18. The method of Claim 15, wherein the third group includes a spring clutch and trigger controlled steering mechanism and a bi-directional clutch and intuitive steering mechanism.

19. The method of Claim 15, further comprising selecting a working device from the group consisting of an auger assembly, a cultivating blade assembly, and a mower blade assembly.

20. The method of Claim 15, further comprising, after step (7):
providing a handle at the second manufacturing facility; and
attaching the handle to the base of the implement at the second manufacturing facility.

21. The method of Claim 15, further comprising, after step (4):
providing at least two wheels at the first manufacturing facility; and
attaching the wheels to the transmission at the first manufacturing facility.

22. The method of Claim 15, further comprising, after step (4):
providing a drive linkage at the first manufacturing facility; and
attaching the drive linkage at the first manufacturing facility to the base of the implement
and selected parts to provide a driving connection therebetween.

23. The method of Claim 15, wherein, after step (7), a substantially completed
implement is produced, and further comprising:

packaging the substantially completed implement; and
transporting the substantially completed implement from the second manufacturing
facility to one of a wholesaler, a retailer, and a customer.

24. The method of Claim 15, wherein step (6) further includes providing a drive
linkage with the working device.

25. The method of Claim 24, wherein step (7) includes connecting the drive linkage
of the working device to the working device and the base of the implement.